Number Twelve

CRIMINAL™

Ed Brubaker
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image®

by
Ed Brubaker and
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Jacob
Phillips

Cruel Summer

Part Eight

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DIGITAL EDITION.

Publication design by Sean Phillips

Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye

He can hear Jane yelling out in the garage... And someone dragging her away...
But he can't move yet.
The pain is still radiating through his body.
So much pain.

Why the hell is he not dead?

...UUUH... FKKK...

A shotgun at that range...

Even with his ***vest*** on...

That should have blown him in half.

...TH... FKK...?

Rock salt.

...NO... WAY...

The guy shot him with fucking rock salt.

Teeg didn't think anyone actually *did* that... Outside the movies.

And it still feels like he got hit with a sledgehammer...

...JESUS...

NNN... FUCK...

He hears the car starting in the garage...

They're *leaving.*

This guy has Jane... and he's getting away...

...NO... WAY...

...NO...

...SHIT...

No.

Where are they...?

There.
Already a block away.

FUCK.
HEY!

TEEG! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *DOING?*

TOMMY...?

Tommy Patterson... For a second Teeg is surprised to see him.

But then it all comes back to him... The heist... The ***safe house***.

HE TOOK HER... HE GOT JANE...

WHAT? WHAT'RE YOU ***TALKING*** ABOUT?

WE GOTTA GO ***AFTER*** THEM...

HE HAS ***MY SHARE*** OF THE MONEY.

WHO?

I DON'T KNOW... JUST... ***DRIVE.***

GO.

Remember me, the guy had said...

But Teeg *didn't.*

Jane remembered him...

But not right away.

..AND ONCE WE GET OUT OF THE CITY, FIND SOMEWHERE TO STOP... WE CAN REALLY TALK...

She was too freaked out at first.

KNOW YOU HAVE QUESTIONS... BUT YOU'RE SAFE NOW...

Teeg was shot... Lying there dying...

And here was his killer, aiming the gun at her.

She thought that was it... The end.

But then the guy started talking instead...

COME ON... WE'VE GOTTA *GO*, JANE...

And she remembered him.

The detective, from the hotel in Center City six weeks ago.

YOU'RE *OKAY* NOW... BUT HIS FRIENDS'LL BE HERE *SOON*.

And he wasn't there to kill her...

No, it was worse.

...ALMOST GAVE UP A FEW ...MES... I KNEW ...WAS GETTING CLOSE...

She had seen something in his eyes that night... When he talked about Vietnam...

When he talked about helping her.

...UT I JUST KEPT HITTING DEAD ENDS... AND I *HATED* IT.

Something off-kilter. Too intense.

It was always like that with the men who thought they were the "good" ones.

That they knew what was right for you.

Those were the ones who ended up trying to strangle you when it went bad.

...HATED THINKING ...OF *YOU* WITH ...HAT *PIECE OF SHIT*...

The men who felt like they ***deserved*** you.

And he had killed Teeg.

Jane hadn't realized she actually ***cared*** until she saw him lying there.

NYWAY, IT DOESN'T TTER NOW... T'S ***ALL*** IN THE PAST.

She didn't think she could care...

And now this son of a bitch thinks he's Prince fucking Charming?

That he's ***saving*** her?

HERE... YOU WANT A CIGARETTE?

Fucking men.

She's got to get out of this car.

AAAA -- !

!!

DON'T!

STOP!

Half a block back, Teeg sees the car swerve...

THERE - RIGHT THERE!

SHE'S FIGHTING...

And for a moment...

GET HIM, JANE.

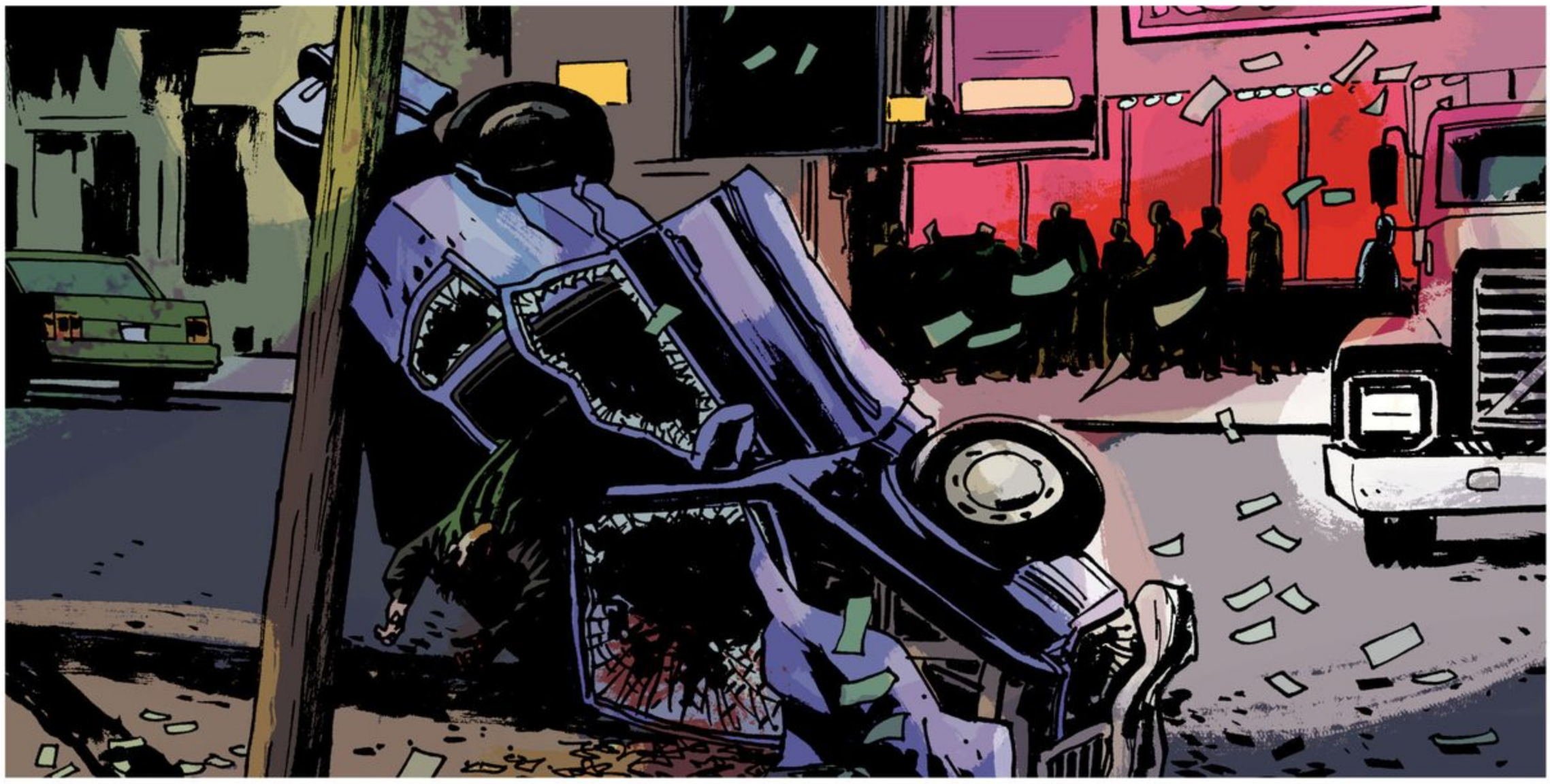
...It gives him hope.

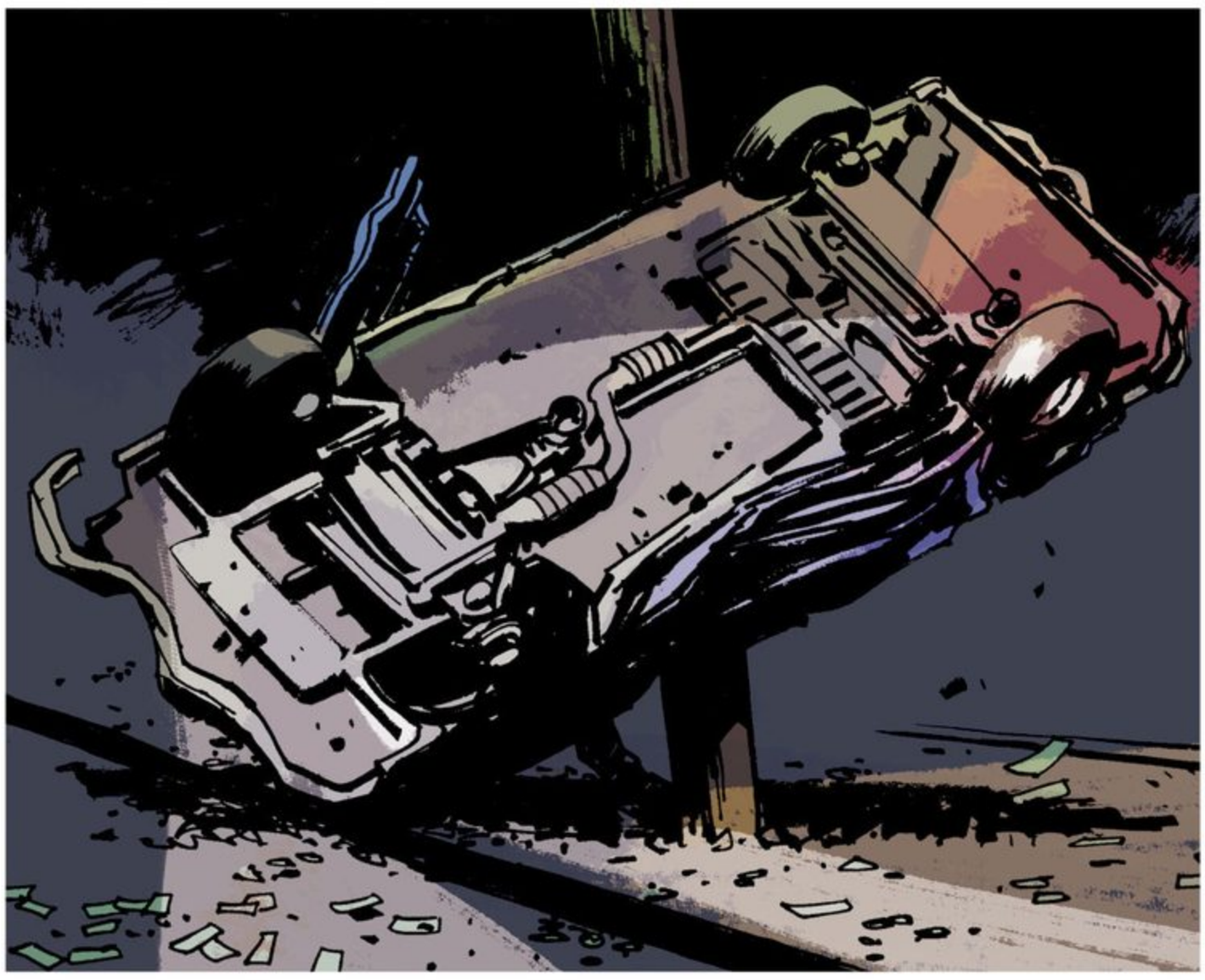
YOU FUCK -- !

LET GO!

FUCKER!

STOP!





TEEG...

...WE HAVE TO GO.

BEFORE THE COPS GET HERE.

YEAH... OKAY.

A Few Weeks Later

Teeg had never felt grief before...

...So he didn't know how much it would destroy him.

...WHAT?

DO YOU WANT *CHEESE* ON YOUR *BURGER?*

AHH... DON'T MAKE ME ONE...

I'M NOT *HUNGRY.*

YOU GOTTA EAT.

NO, I DON'T.

The closest Teeg had ever come to this kind of pain was the times he realized he loved his children.

But that was a pain he could push away...

Run from.

This pain, there was no escaping. It was everywhere.

Even in his sleep.

He tried to pour enough alcohol into himself to reach oblivion... But every night he dreamed anyway.

Dreams of Jane.

Vivid dreams. Happy dreams.

Where the things she promised came true...

Where they spent money like millionaires... And made love in the surf on some distant shore...

And when Teeg woke from those dreams...

He hated the world without her even more.

And he still didn't understand... Who was that guy? Where had he come from?

The papers said he was a ***Private Eye*** from up north, and they blamed the heist on him and Jane...

Even though only a portion of the money was found at their wreck.

...FUCKIN' ROCK SALT...

But it didn't make sense. Not unless she had been playing Teeg the entire time.

TEEG... DID YOU **SAY** SOMETHING?

And if she **was**... then why was she dead?

...ROCK SALT...

WHY THE FUCK DID THAT GUY SHOOT ME WITH ***ROCK SALT...?***

I DON'T ***KNOW,*** MAN...

I'M SORRY.

Ricky *did* know... How the Private Eye had found them... Why he didn't *kill* Teeg...

And it was ripping him up inside.

Every morning now, he hears his dad crying...

Sees him walking around the house like a zombie... Always drinking but somehow never drunk...

He hoped having some *friends* over might bring Teeg back to life at least a little...

But all it does is show Ricky how far *gone* the old man is.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK...

WHERE YOU GOIN'?

JUST KEEP PLAYING...

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

The Private Eye had promised no one would get hurt...

But what the hell were promises worth?

WHAT'S UP?

I DON'T KNOW...

Ricky has no plan here... Just a knife in his gut, tearing him apart...

But Ricky never really planned ***anything***...

DAD...?

That was part of his problem...

??

DAD...?

I JUST DON'T GET IT, KID...

WHY AM I STILL HERE?

He was a raw nerve...

Always in the moment...

IT... ...IT'S MY FAULT...

Always reacting to pain.

...WHAT...?

I'M SORRY...

I'M REALLY SORRY...

I JUST WANTED HER TO GO AWAY...

Just before he opens the back door, Leo feels the house shift...

And hears someone running...

And a table flip over...

A short chase from one room to another... and back again...

And he knows he's too late to stop Ricky from whatever stupid thing he was about to do...

HEY, WHAT'S --

And then it gets worse...

FUCK.

HHKK -- !

GGGGH -- !

And it's too late for ***all of them***.

Right before he pulls the trigger, Leo sees what he's doing, like he's watching it from outside...

He sees the ***ripples*** that will come from this moment.

The neighbors are in their yards, so there'll be no covering it up... The police will be here in minutes...

And Tommy Patterson won't let his son go down... No, he'll take the blame...

He'll go to prison for Leo's crime... and he'll die there someday...

And Ricky... this won't save Ricky, not really...

It'll just be another thing that kills him ***slowly***.

But he pulls the trigger anyway...

And the whole world explodes.

...WHAT... WHAT DID...

LEO -- WHAT HAPPENED?!

OH MY GOD...

LEO... LEO, LISTEN TO ME...

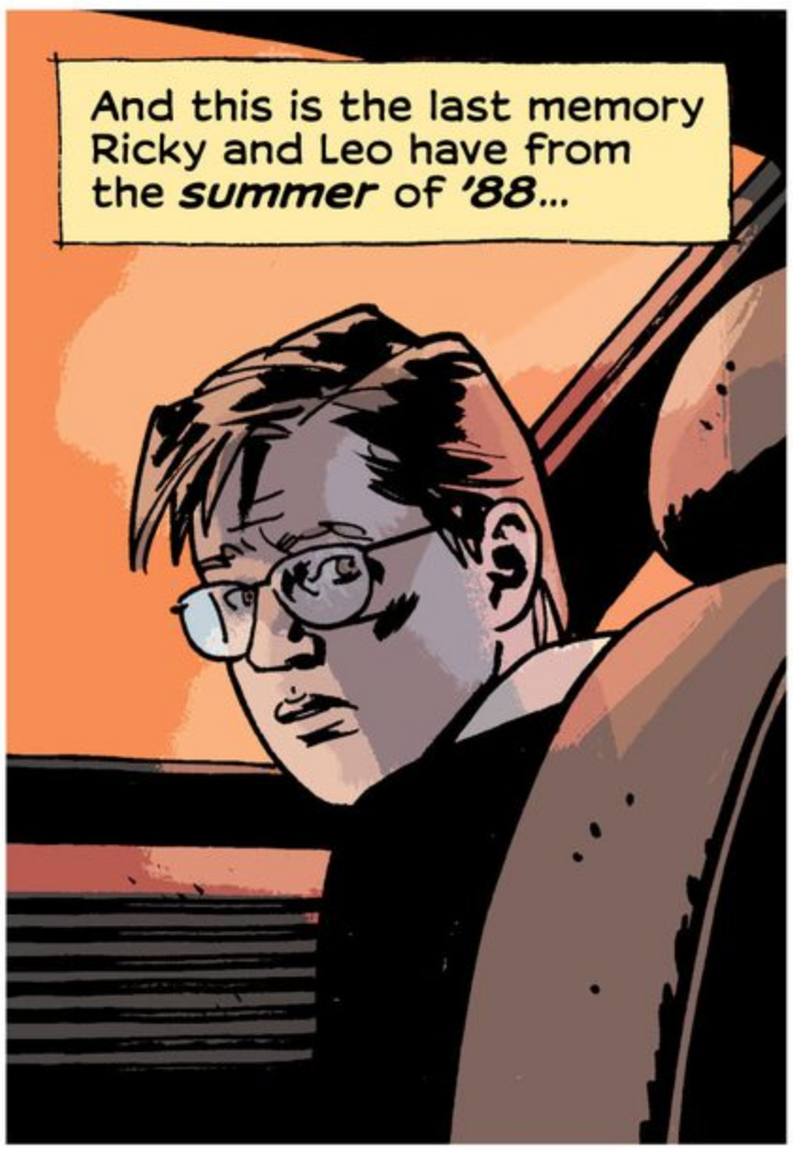
GIVE ME THAT... GIVE IT TO ME...

IZZY, YOU NEED TO GET THEM OUT OF HERE... NOW.

YEAH, SURE TOMMY... BUT... WHAT ARE YOU GONNA...?

JUST GO - GO!
JIM BEAN
BOURBON

LEO... GO WITH JACOB AND IZZY...
GO!


And this is the last memory Ricky and Leo have from the *summer* of *'88*...

Sitting in the back of a car, covered in blood...

Wondering how life can possibly go on.

The End
Brubaker Phillips

The Secret Ingredient is Crime

And so we come to the end of CRUEL SUMMER, and the end of this volume of CRIMINAL as well. I hope you enjoyed our big finale, even though we all knew what was coming since issue 1. And really, since our first book, Coward.

Anyway, we've had a great time experimenting with the monthly comic format and trying to create a package every issue that's worth your time and money… And when we do our next series, we'll continue that tradition.

And this will certainly not be the end of CRIMINAL. This is actually the longest sustained run of CRIMINAL we've ever done, these 12 issues, and I'd like to thank all of you – readers and retailers – for supporting it. The market is still surprisingly hostile to straight crime comics, so I really appreciate that we got to do this book. And double-thanks to all of you who keep turning your friends onto our books and buying them as presents for your parents to show them that comics aren't just superheroes.

***

So… What are we doing next? Another original graphic novel (or OGN in the parlance of our times) in the same format as MY HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN JUNKIES. This time it's a book called PULP and it is both a wild west story and a story about a pulp writer in 1930s New York. Sean asked me to write a western and apparently this is the closest I could get – the tale of an outlaw and the man who writes his stories.

PULP comes out in May and by the time this issue is out, you should be able to find a preview for it online. If you're one of our long-time readers you might have a standing order with your shop for whatever we put out, but if not then please tell your local comics retailer you want a copy on release day. Comics shops usually do not stock a hardback book as deeply as they do a single issue of a comic, so if you don't want to have to wait for a reorder, you have to let them know to set one aside for you.

Sean and I will be going right from PULP to our next monthly series in the summer, but we won't be announcing it yet. It's probably not what anyone will expect from us, that's all I will say for now.

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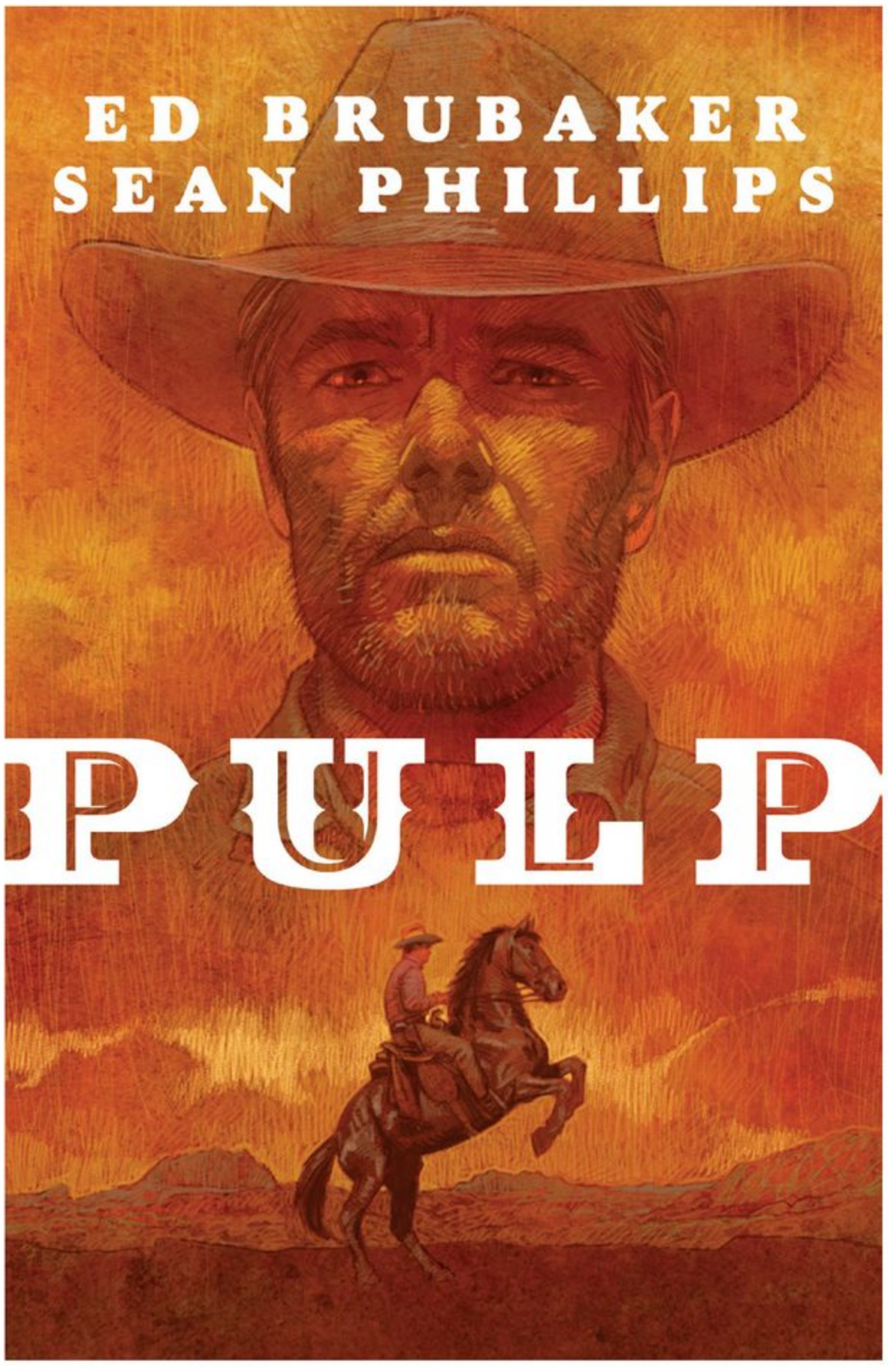
In our back pages this month, we have a great new article by Kim Morgan on Jacques Tourneur's NIGHTFALL with art by Sean, and following that, we have a preview of Jake's new comic, actually. The little upstart is taking over the world already. It's written by Chris Condon and it's out from Image Comics soon, so keep your eyes peeled and tell your retailer about it.



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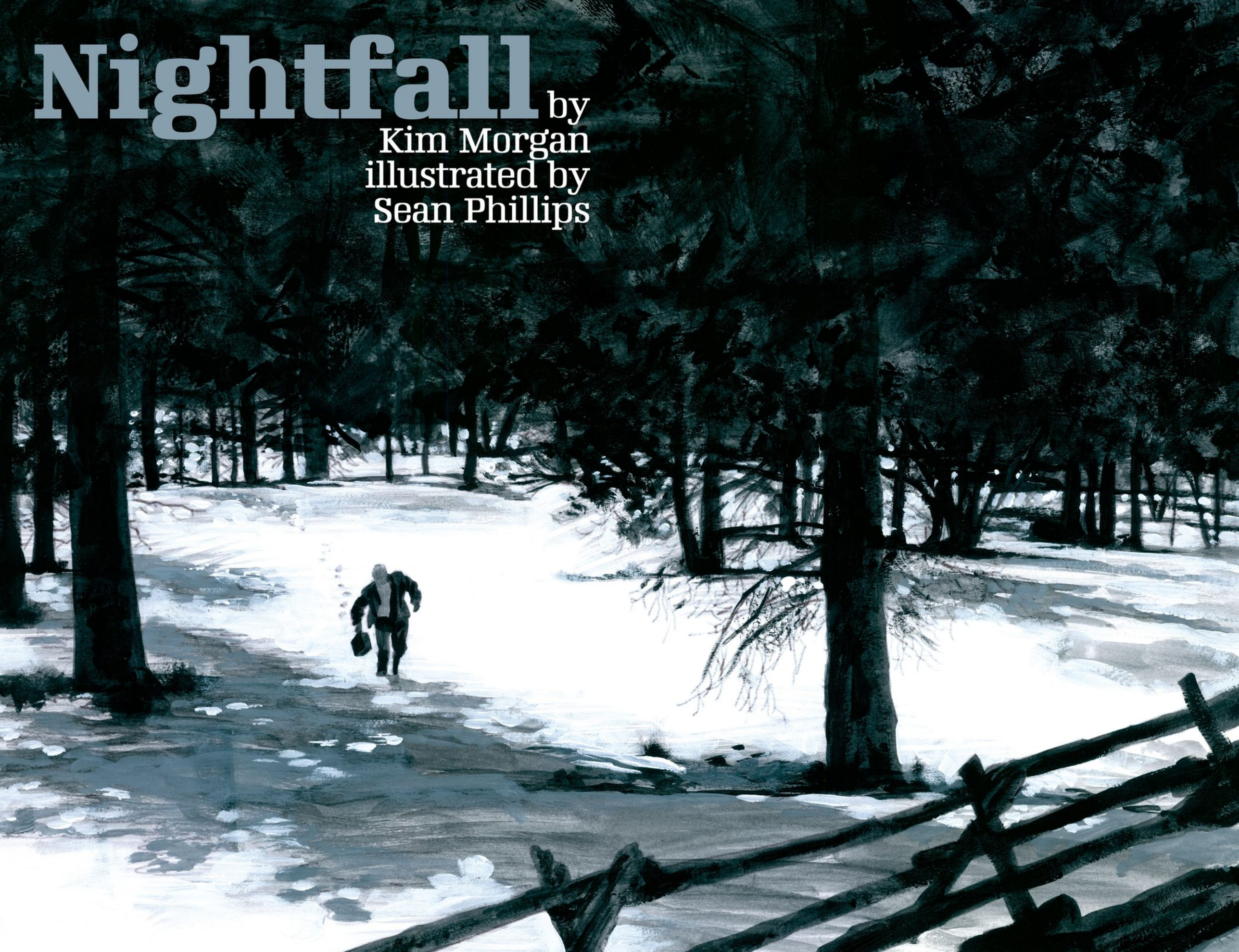
Write to us at: criminalcomic@gmail.com and tell us your thoughts on the big finale, and we'll be back in a few months with PULP.

Nightfall

by
Kim Morgan
illustrated by
Sean Phillips



"Mixing fear and the ridiculous can be very exciting."
-- Jacques Tourneur

Nightfall is a work of striking juxtapositions of tone and spirit that, by picture end, feels like an unforgettable, weirdly disarming person -- you're charmed, discombobulated, slightly disturbed – you're not sure what to make of it all – in a good way – in a *great* way. That's director Jacques Tourneur and his beauteous beasts here (Aldo Ray, Anne Bancroft, Brian Keith, Rudy Bond). From cat to zombie to Mitchum to a demon in the tree to Aldo in the snow, Tourneur casts a spell and you'll find yourself falling in love —a kind of dreamy, demented love.

The love begins from the first frame. It opens with Aldo Ray at a newsstand – why is this so lovely? Not sure. But then night starts to fall – the lights buzz on as he peruses newspapers from different states, and he's startled by that harsh light. Something's eating this young man but at this point, we don't know why (we'll find out). We're just intrigued by him, his surroundings, what he's looking for, *why* he's looking at these papers. And then in that night we see a neon lit Los Angeles jungle shimmering in the blackness – Hollywood haunts like Miceli's, Firefly, and Musso & Frank light the sky – the picture almost luxuriates in it – both romantic and eerie. And from that blackness, the movie will eventually find itself into blinding whiteness – much further away – within the snow of the foreboding Wyoming Wilderness – but right now it's Los Angeles.

Adapted by Stirling Silliphant from David Goodis's 1947 novel and exquisitely shot by Burnett Guffey (who also lensed Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* and Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*, as well as other magnificent movies) the picture ingeniously weaves a convoluted story, blistering violence, existential angst, naturalistic acting, and gentle romanticism without ever feeling forced. And as stated earlier – it's very funny – something Tourneur (who directed, among other splendid pictures, *Cat People, I Walked with a Zombie, Night of the Demon, Out of the Past*) seems to have intended. Even the theme song, though romantic, seems a bit funny (Al Hibler crooning "*Nightfaaaaall*...and you!" – a tune that could grace a Ross Hunter production easily). It works in this gritty milieu. Why not? Somehow it echoes Tourneur's own sly sense of humor.

The story is structured much like *Out of the Past*, with our hero, Rayburn Vanning (Ray) relating his waking nightmare to a woman. In this instance that lovely lady, Marie Gardner (Bancroft), isn't *all* innocent (who is?) but she means well. Pulling a damsel-in-distress act for the benefit of two thugs' intent on jumping Ray, she sets up the poor guy, thinking these jerks are police officers. Vanning's then accosted by Red (Bond) and John (Keith) and hauled off to a deserted oil derrick. An unsettling yet amusing scene, with a strangely cordial, yet terrifying conversation occurs in the car – no matter he's set to be tortured. The thugs want to know where that money's hidden (more on that too), something Vanning continually clams up about. But Vanning escapes, finds his way to Marie's apartment and tells her about the convoluted predicament that's left him understandably freaked out.

And, god, what a mess poor innocent Vanning is in. Here's part of it: While on a camping/hunting trip in Jackson Hole, Wyoming with best friend Dr. Edward Gurston (Frank Albertson) Vanning has a rather sticky discussion about Doc's much younger wife (whom we learn later has a thing for Vanning and sent him letters saying so). Conversation is cut short when a car crashes off an embankment and out emerge two shady characters (Red and John), worse for wear but jacked up on crooked adrenaline. They need help. Doc fixes John's arm, and soon realizes they're now unlucky witnesses – these men just robbed a bank – and then, shockingly, Doc is shot dead. Vanning is left injured as the crooks blaze off. But the crooks make an enormous almost metaphorical mistake – they grab the doctor's bag instead of their loot. Vanning stashes the dough and high-tails it – moving from town to town under the suspicion that he killed Doc, and ending up in Los Angeles, where the poor, sensitive lug is being tailed by insurance investigator Ben Fraser (James Gregory), who can't see Vanning committing the crime. He ain't the type.

And as played by Aldo Ray – he really *doesn't* seem the type. One of the more striking aspects to *Nightfall* is its casting, and the barrel-chested Ray who was a natural born actor (watch his first and largely unschooled leading role in George Cukor's *The Marrying Kind* and you'll see how immediately gifted the man was – also in Anthony Mann's brilliant *Men in War*). Ray is the consummate good guy in-over-his-head here.

With his rough-hewn, yet uniquely delicate voice, masculine yet boyish appeal (he sometimes looks like he literally walked off a football field, which is why Cukor made him take ballet before *The Marrying Kind*) Ray always exuded a different kind of mystery within his normalcy. An ex-Frogman who fought in Iwo Jima, Ray often looked like he was hiding something – something *nice*. That inside he had the soul of a poet or artist -- a man of depth beyond what would be expected of his tough exterior. And perhaps being nice in a nasty world is a curse. And requires toughness. Appropriately, in *Nightfall*, he's a nice artist. He's *really* gonna struggle.

And against Brian Keith, Ray's artistic vulnerability really rises to the surface. Like Ray, Keith feels so real and new school/ old school (if that makes sense). His delivery manages to be both distracted and pithy rather than rat-a-tat. And he's so agreeable here that the sweeter side of Ray works like Keith's catnip. But he's a meanie. A funny meanie. When he humorously claims that Red's homicidal kicks stem from his lack of childhood play ("When Red was a kid they didn't have enough playgrounds. He's sort of an adult delinquent.") he's both revelatory and teasing. All of his banter towards Red is cleverly berating: "The top of your head never closed up when you were a kid. Neither did your mouth."

Cracking wise with Red, the two spar like men fixing to off each other, but who are quite simply, getting on each other's nerves (I wondered if the Coens saw this movie before making *Fargo*). They talk and argue and Keith is all oddly sexy, fatherly menace, and Bond is like some giggling terrifying clown, but darker fates await them. Silent snow, secret snow.

There's so much here – pitting an older doctor and his younger, artist friend against two thugs – one a grinning eager beaver, violence-lusting psychopathic creep and the other, a cool-as-a-cucumber, clever crook whose relaxed manner makes you almost wish he was your friend. (He's a murderer – so not a good idea). It features a chic fashion show with Bancroft as a "mannequin" followed by a cuddly rural bus ride where Anne and Aldo express mutual romantic feelings – she rises to his whiskers – and they are exceptionally romantic together. There's ruthless violence committed against good Samaritans mixed with quippy one liners and deliciously dark humor. In short, *Nightfall* is a trip. And a literal trip for Vanning fated to be the wrong man. Aw, but, again, he's a nice guy. The world is mean.

This wild, almost ridiculous fate was something Tourneur excelled at. It was practically encoded in his DNA – a result of real-life trauma. Based on the oddball, mean spirited treatment at the hands of his filmmaker father, Tourneur developed a dark sense of the absurd. As written in John Wakemen's "Film Directors Vol. 1 1890-1946" Tourneur believed that the childhood he endured – one of "grotesque punishment" lay at the root of his cinematic obsessions. Relating that he was sent to a poor school and teased unmercifully for his square suspenders, Tourneau said: "I think this is what prompted me to introduce comic touches into the dramatic moments of my films… Mixing fear and the ridiculous can be very exciting."

Indeed, they can. There's a scene in the car during which Red can't wait to torture a terrified Vanning. John and Red keep talking about how Vanning is "tough." Vanning keeps saying he can't talk. John says, "Well, that's because you're tough. And after we get you when you're not so tough anymore, you're gonna tell us, you'll say anything we want you to say." Vanning answers, "I'm not trying to get hurt, if I knew, I'd tell ya."

John: That's in the hearts and flowers department.
Red: You know where that'll get ya!
John: Nowhere.
Vanning: We'll all be nowhere.
Red: He's too tough, John, a lot too tough, what do you say, John?
John: I say he's too tough.
Vanning: I'm not tough, I'm scared stiff.

Vanning *is* scared stiff. But he's got to appear tough, or rather firm. But Red keeps going – he delivers part of the fate that Vanning (again, a sensitive artist) must face in the movie. Red, all smiles, can't wait to torture, and he sinisterly and bizarrely sings: "The tougher they are the more fun they are, tra-la."

I can practically hear Tourneur giggling along with that and being horrified. And Aldo Ray embodying Tourneur's past. And maybe his own. "Tra-la."

Coming Summer 2020 from Image Comics

CHRIS CONDON
JACOB PHILLIPS

THAT TEXAS BLOOD

"It's like A WHOLE OTHER COUNTRY." That's what the Texas travel guide says.

Well.

Maybe true, but sometimes... Well. Sometimes it feels more like another world.

Sky's a beauty.

I'm sure, ***Sheriff,*** I'm sure, meanwhile your damn wife is slavin' away makin' you your damn birthday dinner without her ***much needed*** casserole dish!

Well. Ruthy told me she'd send Ray over and... Well.

I've been sheriff of this county for... Oh, I don't want to say how long. Let's just say that. For a long time.

My, how I'd like to sit down with a good book on the porch and watch the sunset, but right now, I'm too busy puttin' my blood, sweat, and tears into this here chicken dinner.

Well.

Well, well, well. Your answer to everything.

And they tell ya you'll get older and they tell ya you'll slow down but they don't much say how you'll feel it in your bones.

Had a dream about Sam again. Same as always. About Walter.

Well.

I told you. You're just gettin' on in years and feelin' guilty.

Not so much an ache or a pain but a... Well. A premonition

Days comin' to a close. No more on the horizon.

Sky's a beauty.

Damn it, Joe... It's just too damn hot in this house.

Just ***death.***

Too. Damn. Hot.

And that's the thing that gets me, is they say it like it's a good thing, gettin' older.

Ray just drove by goin' damn near 120.

Maybe he's comin' with my casserole dish.

Not like it's a weakness.

Hrrm.

Not like it's a shame.

COUNTY SHERIFF

He... He drinking again, Joe?

Well.

Looks it.

I sure hope he ain't takin' it out on Ruthy again...

Well.

Yeah. Well.

Not like you're past your glory days. Just a shadow of your former self.

Ray!

Or a nightmare come to roost.

Do you have any idea how damn *fast* you were—

Jesus.

Ray. I need you to drop the gun now and step out of the vehicle.

She... She...

Ray. Now.

I'm... I'm sorry, I didn't--

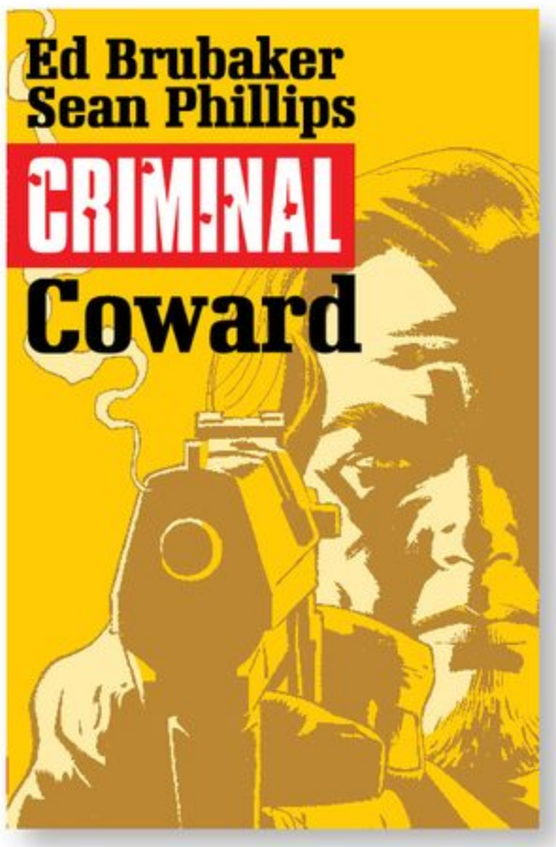
Ray!

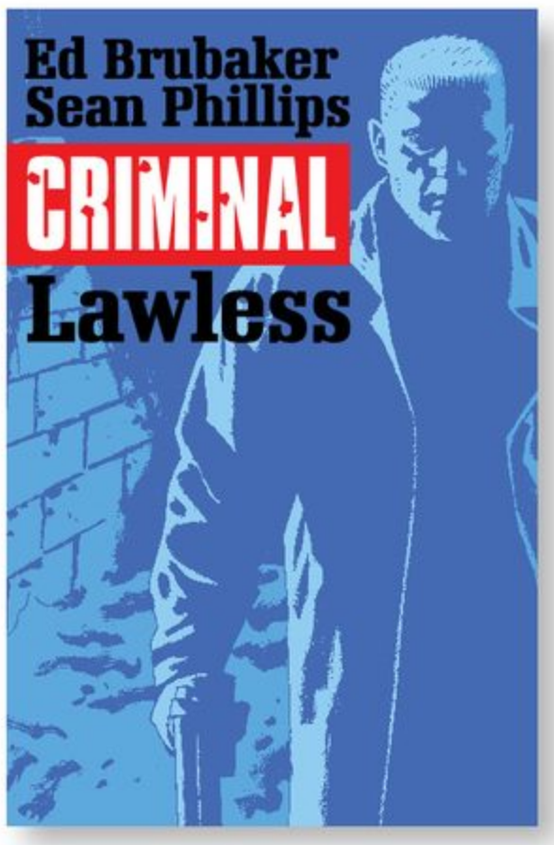
'Cause no matter what happens... Good, bad... You still just gotta keep wakin' up.

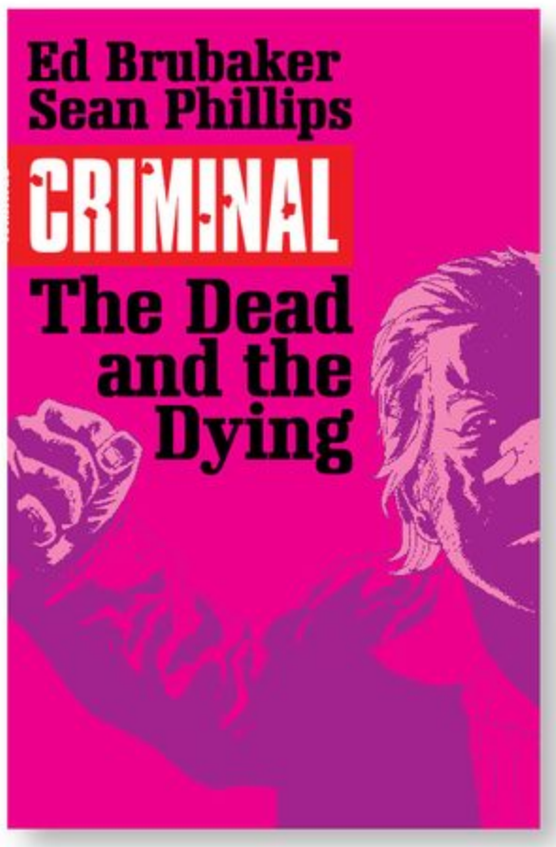
KABLAM

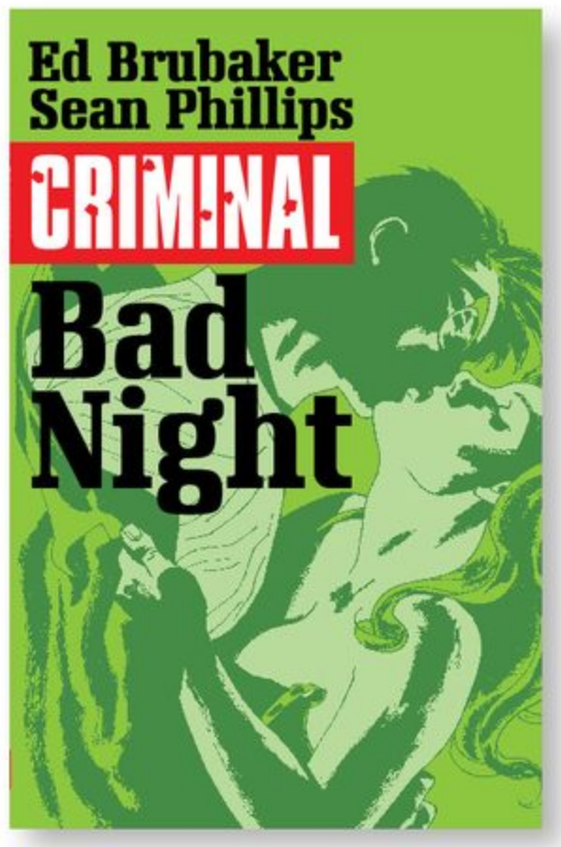
Sheriff Joe Bob Coates has always lived in Fort Lehane. He's always been in Ambrose County. It's always been in his blood. It's a Texas thing. But the crimes don't stop. And they don't get easier. For some reason... they keep getting worse. And worse. And... Well. It's Texas. And Joe Bob is tough. Maybe he's tough enough to fight it. To last. It's in his blood, after all.
THAT TEXAS BLOOD.

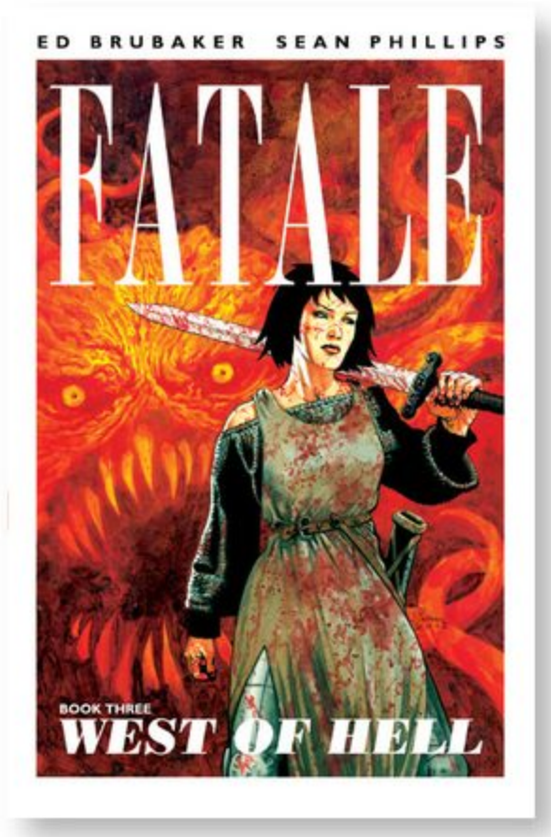
Enter The World Of Brubaker And Phillips

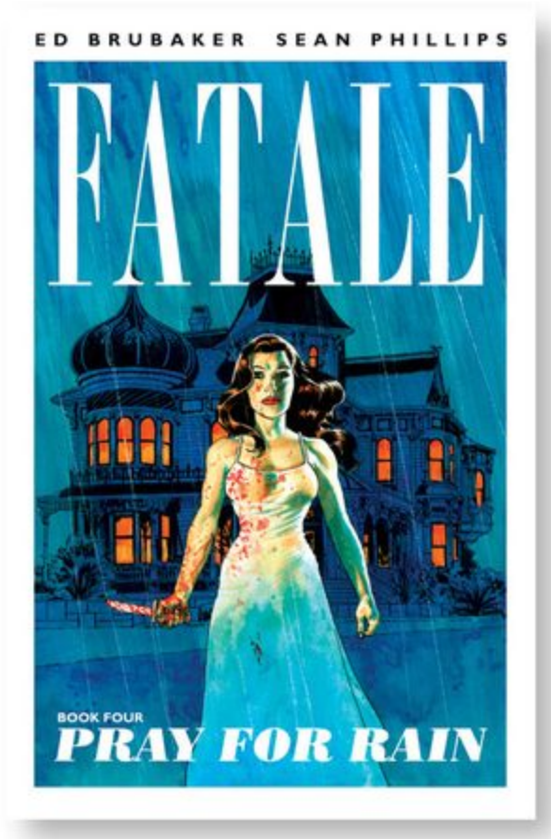


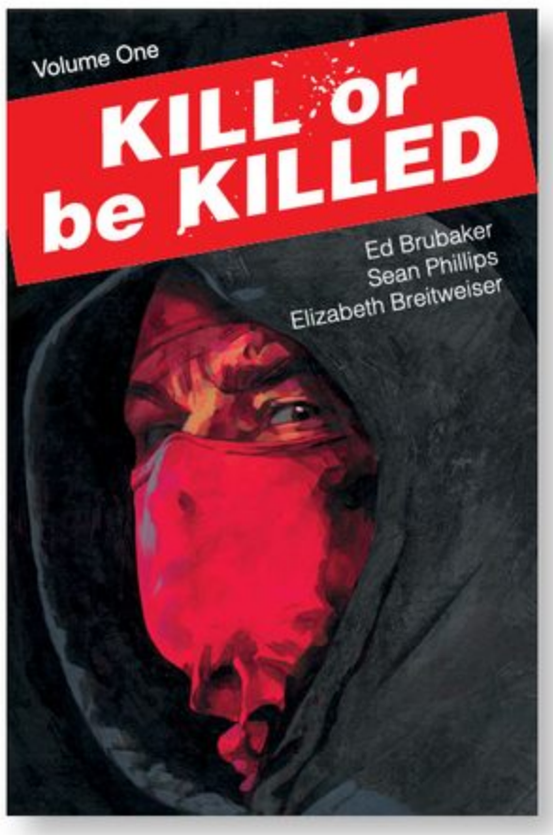


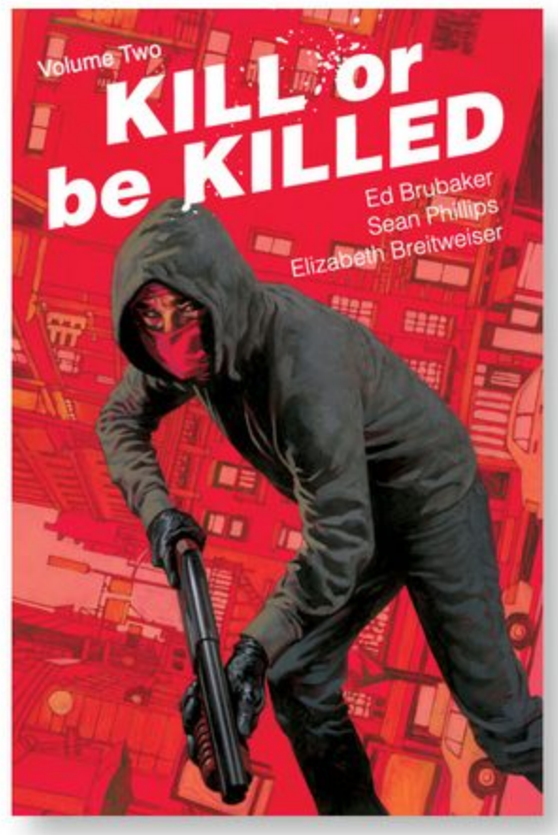


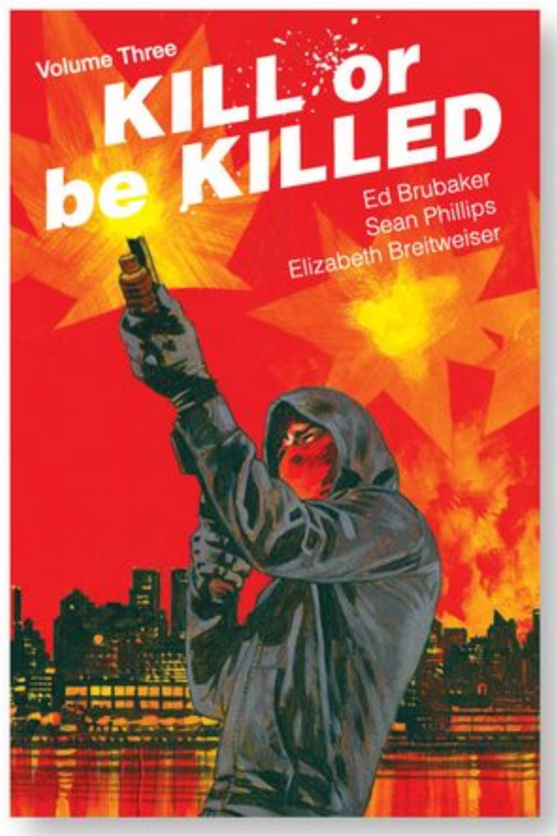


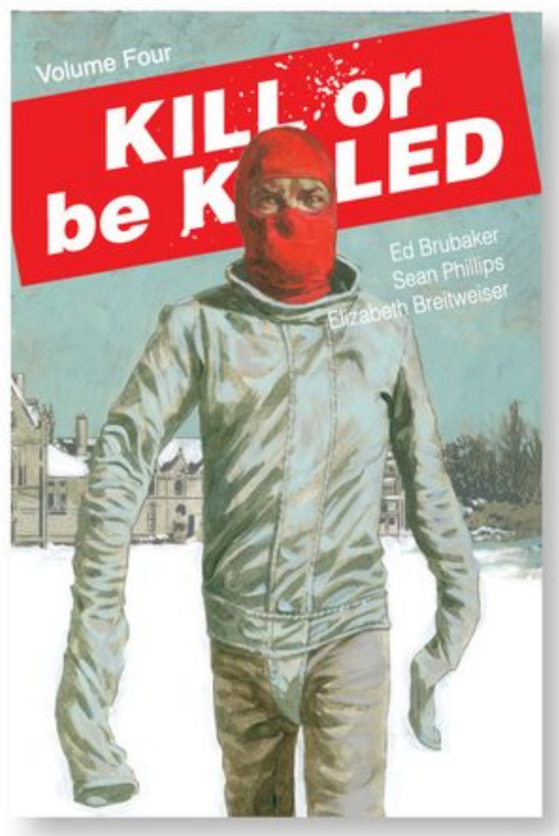








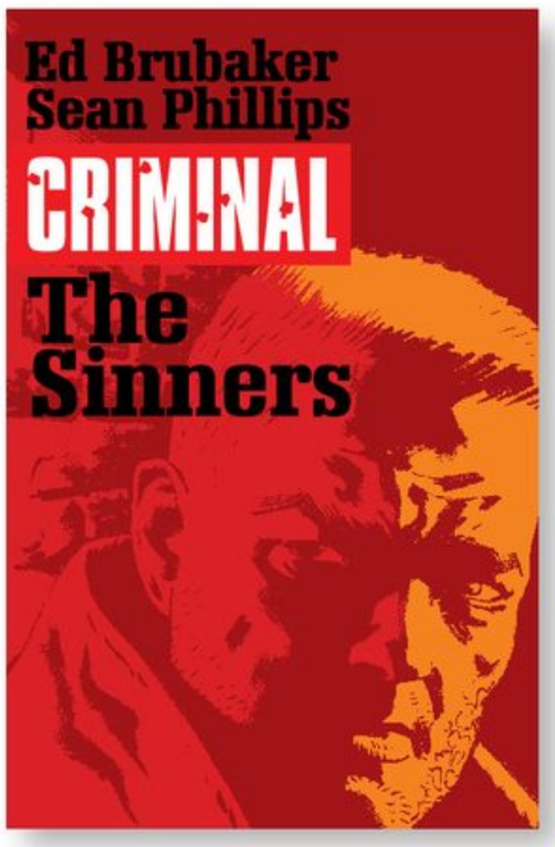


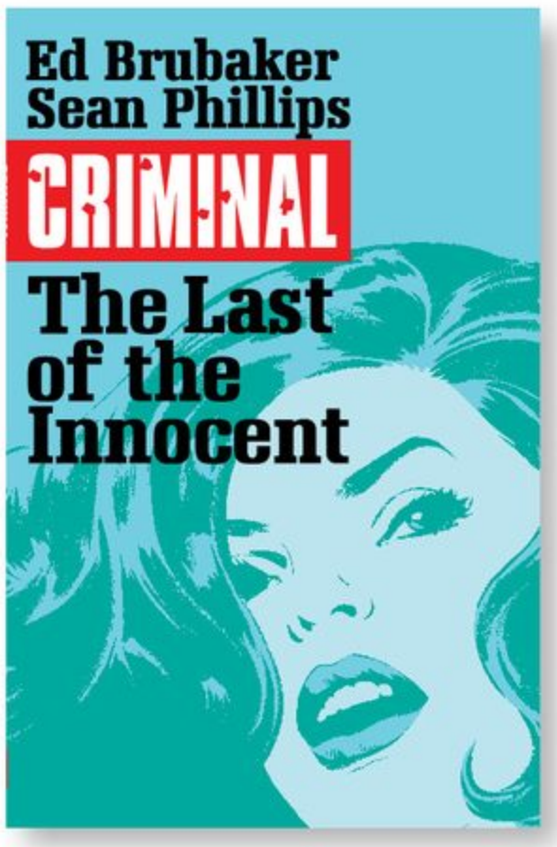


"Far and away the best work yet from one of the best teams in the history of comics."
-Brian K. Vaughan
(PAPER GIRLS, SAGA)

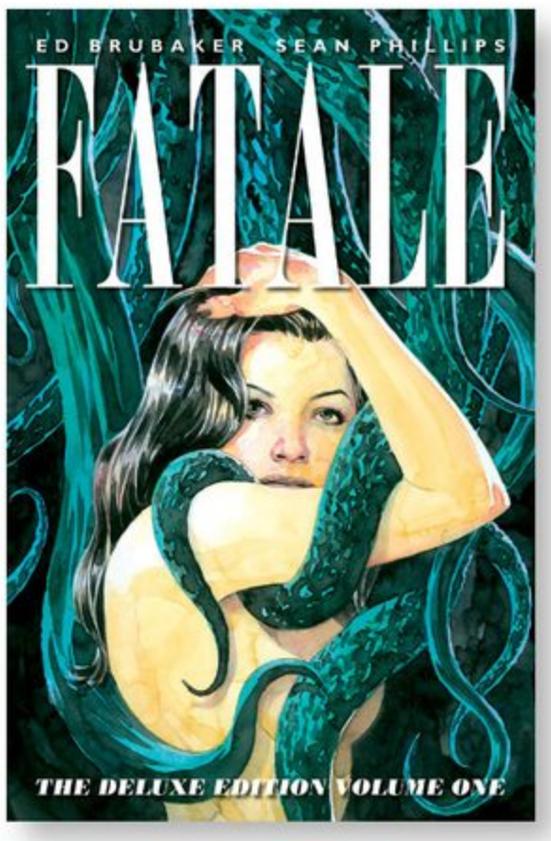
"Easily one of the best comics of the 21st century...
a story that reflects the crooked soul of our times."
-Tom King
(Mr Miracle, Sheriff of Babylon)

"The woozy, haunted, authentic intensity of BAD WEEKEND proves conclusively that Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips are one of the best creative teams in the world right now."
-Warren Ellis
(Gun Machine, Transmetropolitan)

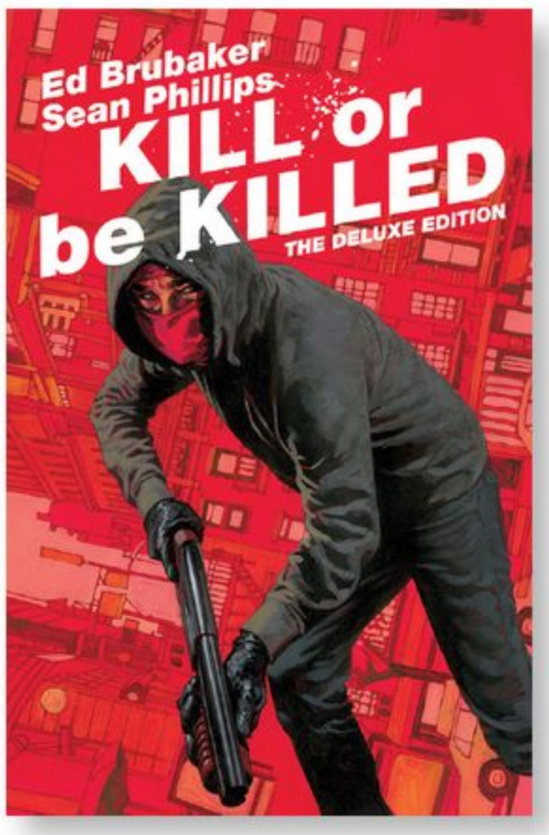




"CRIMINAL is equal parts John Woo's THE KILLER, Stanley Kubrick's THE KILLING, and Francis Ford Coppola's THE GODFATHER."
- Playboy Magazine



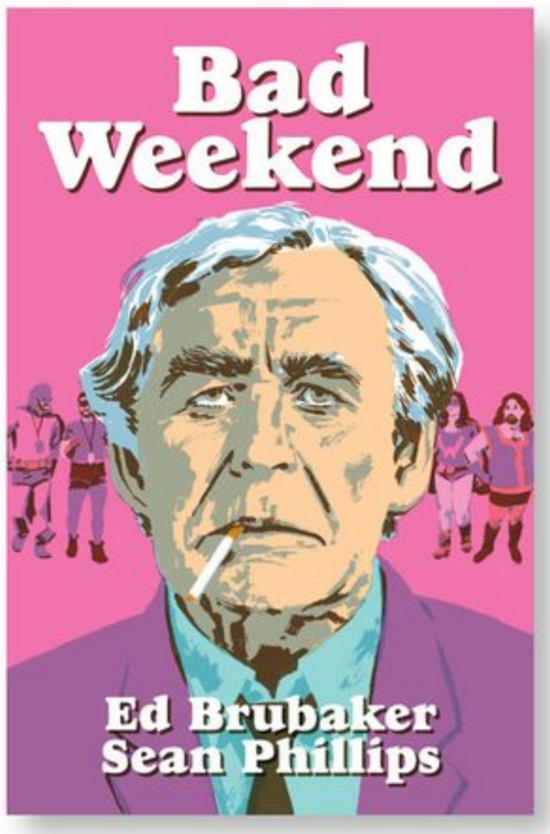
"Immortality may be a double-edged sword, but it's one the intoxicating Jo wields with a boundless grace in this addictive page-turner."
- Publishers Weekly

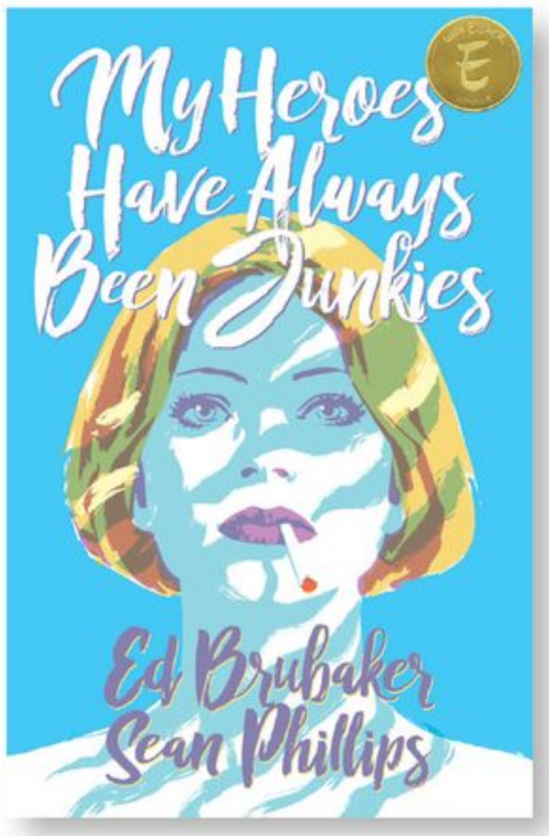


"Brubaker's next "Kill" oozes with modern pulp."
- USAToday

"KILL OR BE KILLED is magnificent, a true thing of beauty in a tale that is so damn ugly."
- Nerdist

"One of comics dream teams delivers their best story yet in THE FADE OUT, an old Hollywood murder mystery draped against HUAC and the Red Scare."
- New York Magazine





Newsweek's Best Comic Books of 2018

Thrillist's Best Comics & Graphic Novels

Diamond Gem Award for Best Original Graphic novel 2018

Eisner Award Winner - Best Original Graphic Novel

Ringo Award Winner - Best Original Graphic Novel

Number Twelve

CRIMINAL

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
Jacob Phillips

Rated M / Mature